REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 12 and 13 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is cancelled by the present response, claims 2-11 and 14-20 having been previously cancelled. Claims 1, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 5,673,477 to Hattori et al. (herein "Hattori") in view of U.S. patent 5,416,429 to McQuade et al. (herein "McQuade").

Addressing the rejection of claims 1, 12, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hattori in view of McQuade, that rejection is traversed by the present response.

It is initially noted that claim 12 is amended by the present response to clarify the feature of the "fabricated bending point". Specifically, claim 12 now recites "wherein the fabricated bending point bends in an overdriving operation". That subject matter is discussed in the present specification at page 103, line 9 et. seq.

It is respectfully submitted that independent claim 12, and claim 13 dependent therefrom, distinguishes over the applied art to Hattori in view of McQuade in the following aspects.

One basis for the outstanding rejection indicates that in Figure 16(a) Hattori discloses that the plurality of contact probes 4 are arranged such that the axial lines of the contact pins 38, 40 are substantially vertical to a contact face A of an object of measurement.[1]

However, the above-noted basis for the outstanding rejection is traversed. More specifically attached to the present response as an Appendix is a reproduction of Figures 16(a), 16(b) of Hattori with an annotation showing the axial lines of the contact pins. As shown in the attached Appendix, in Hattori the plurality of contact probes are arranged such

[1] Office Action of May 7, 2003, page 4, lines 14-16.

that the axial lines (the direction of the swelling portion 38) of the contact pins are substantially parallel (Fig. 16a) or slanting (Fig. 16b) to a contact face A of an object of measurement.

In contrast to Hattori, and as positively recited in independent claim 12, the plurality of contact pins "are arranged such that the axial lines of the contact pins are substantially ***vertical to a contact face*** of an object of measurement" (emphasis added). Such subject matter is shown, for example, in Figure 9 in the present specification in which the axial lines of the contact pins 3aN are substantially vertical to a contact face Pa of an object of measurement.

For the above-noted reasons alone claims 12 and 13 distinguish over the applied art.

Further, applicants note that in the claimed invention the pins are designed to bend at the fabricated bending point in an overdriving operation. That operation is in contrast to Hattori. In Hattori, and with reference to Figure 2 therein, the contact pins only get longer in the overdrive operation, and do not bend at a bending point in the overdriving operation. Thus, the claimed bending point and the noted bending point in Hattori are clearly different types of points with different functions.

A further basis for the outstanding rejection indicates that Hattori discloses a plurality of contact pins 38, 40 to include a fabricated bending point 39 at a middle portion in an axial line direction with a Ni plating treatment.[2] Applicants traverse that position as in Hattori the Ni film 5 is formed on a steel wire 4a by electroplating.

In contrast to Hattori, the claimed contact pins are made of Ni only by plating, and as a result, the fabricated bending point in the present invention can be formed precisely.

[2] Office Action of May 7, 2003, page 4, lines 19-20.

In such ways, the invention as recited in independent claim 12, and the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to clearly distinguish over the teachings in Hattori as Hattori is relied upon in the Office Action.

Moreover, no teachings in McQuade can overcome the above-noted deficiencies in Hattori.

Thereby, independent claim 12, and claim 13 dependent therefrom, are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art to Hattori in view of McQuade.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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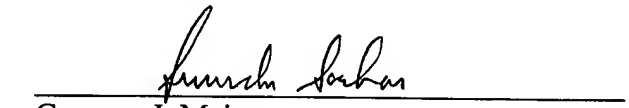

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